



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Program

I. Introduction

Tennessee's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program provides State certification for individuals who provide direct peer-to-peer support services to others who have mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. Because of their lived experience, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS's) can, with specialized training and guidance, draw from their own journey of recovery to inspire hope and provide support to others who are facing similar situations. This document defines the role, purpose, functions, and responsibilities of the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist in Tennessee and establishes a fair methodology for evaluation of competency. The credential defines the minimum standards of competency, which are the knowledge and the skills required of the position.

This certification does not imply that Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialists are qualified to diagnose an illness, prescribe medication, or provide clinical services. Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialists do not provide treatment; their role is primarily focused on providing support and recovery education. Tennessee's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program is not an offer of employment or job placement by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS). TDMHSAS certification in no way guarantees employment. Each person certified as a Peer Recovery Specialist should apply for positions available in his or her community. Each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist must be under the supervision of a professional as defined by the State.

II. Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Definition

A Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) is someone who has self-identified as being in recovery from mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. In addition, a CPRS has completed specialized training recognized by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services on how to provide peer recovery services based on the principles of recovery and resiliency.

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists can provide support to others with mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders and help them achieve their personal recovery goals by promoting self-determination, personal responsibility, and the empowerment inherent in self-directed recovery.

Direct peer-to-peer services can include a variety of support services, such as:

- assisting in the development and achievement of strengths-based individual goals
- serving as an advocate, mentor, or facilitator for resolution of issues that a peer is unable to resolve on his or her own

- assisting in the development and achievement of rehabilitation goals
- developing community support
- providing information on ways to maintain personal wellness and recovery
- providing information on behavioral health system navigation

A Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist who is:

1. Employed by an agency that is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, **and**
2. Under the general supervision of a mental health or substance use disorder professional in accordance with acceptable guidelines and standards of practice as defined by the State

is authorized to provide Medicaid-reimbursable peer recovery services in outpatient and inpatient programs under the employer's contract with the health plans. A Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist is never authorized to provide peer recovery services on their own for pay or for reimbursement from a health plan and doing so constitutes unethical behavior and a violation of the scope of activities for a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist.

For information comparing Certified Peer Recovery Specialist roles with other behavioral health staff, see the following chart.

Peer Recovery Specialists and Role Comparisons						
	12-Step Sponsor	Peer Recovery Specialist	Case Manager	Psychosocial and Recovery Staff	Substance Abuse Professional	Mental Health Professional
Planning Service	Reviews the meaning of the 12 Steps and emphasizes their importance.	Assists the individual in developing and monitoring a recovery plan.	Assists the individual in developing a service plan.	Assists the individual in developing an employment/housing plan.	Develops treatment plan with individual.	Develops treatment plan with the individual.
Resource Service	Accesses professional help if assistance outside the scope of the 12 Step Program is needed.	Teaches, role models, coaches how to use resources and navigate the mental health and/or substance abuse systems.	Provides referral and linkage.	Identifies resources needed to implement plan.	Conducts clinical assessment.	Conducts clinical assessment.
Illness Management Service	Encourages the person to work with others in recovery as soon as possible and begins to take him or her on Twelfth Step calls.	Teaches, supports, coaches the acquisition and exercise of skills needed for management of symptoms.	Ensures individual has access, continuity of care throughout the mental health and primary healthcare system.	Assists the individual so that illness symptoms do not negatively impact employment and housing goals.	Provides clinical education and training regarding symptomatology and medication management.	Provides clinical education and training regarding symptomatology and medication management.
Medication Management Service	N/A	Encourages appropriate use of medication; holds the person accountable for his or her actions; teaches, models monitoring symptoms and/or medication reactions, effective communication with doctors, therapists.	Ensures individual has resources to acquire medication, has transportation for appointments, and attends appointments.	Educates employers, landlords on the treatment process, the role of medication, and symptoms in the management of the illness, as appropriate.	Provides clinical treatment to include individual and group therapy focusing on education of the role of medication in the recovery process.	Provides clinical treatment to include individual and group therapy focusing on education of the role of medication in the recovery process.
Employment/Housing Services	Urges the person to join in group activities as soon as possible.	Teaches, models, coaches skills and attributes needed to attain and maintain employment and housing.	Ensures individual has access to psychosocial rehab, supportive employment, and housing options.	Provides employment and housing support by facilitating opportunities for housing and job placement.	Provides clinical consultation and assessment.	Provides clinical consultation and assessment.
Education Services	Promotes awareness of 12 Step literature, scope of the 12 Steps, and the three Legacies (Recovery, Unity and Service)	Teaches recovery education such as WRAP®, BRIDGES, IMR, and/or 12 Steps for knowledge and skills needed to manage illness	Encourages individual to utilize community/natural supports to assist in illness management.	Teaches skills needed to maintain housing and employment.	Provides clinical support through individual or group therapy sessions.	Provides clinical support through individual or group therapy sessions.

III. CPRS Program Operation

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services operates Tennessee's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Program with consultation from the CPRS Advisory Committee.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services shall develop and reserves the right to make any necessary changes to CPRS Guidelines, Standards and Procedures without prior notification so that appropriate authority to grant certification and acceptable professional standards are established. Notices of any necessary changes will be emailed to all currently certified Peer Recovery Specialists and posted on the state website.

CPRS Advisory Committee

The CPRS Advisory Committee meets on an on-going basis and shall be made up of, but is not limited to, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, behavioral health service providers, and the TDMHSAS. The CPRS Advisory Committee has the duty and responsibility to function in such a manner as to promote and protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. Thus, the Committee makes recommendations that include, but are not limited to, requirements of certification, training, and acceptable continuing education. A subcommittee of the CPRS Advisory Committee will be comprised solely of currently Certified Peer Recovery Specialists.

IV. Certification Guidelines

Each applicant must meet all minimum requirements as outlined by CPRS Guidelines, Standards and Procedures. After the TDMHSAS has reviewed the application, applicants will be sent an email confirming their status and will receive their certificate in the mail.

Certification Standards

To become certified as a Peer Recovery Specialist in the State of Tennessee, all applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Be at least age eighteen (18) years of age or older;
2. Hold a high school diploma or General Equivalency Degree (GED);
3. Have current or past mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorder;
4. Self-identify as a person who is in recovery from mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorder as part of his or her personal recovery process;
5. Have demonstrated strengths evident of self-directed recovery, as documented in three letters of reference;
6. Provide documentation of successful completion of the state's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training. For information on the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services toll-free at 1-800-560-5767 or visit the website at <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>
7. Have successfully demonstrated competency through testing and evaluation as required by the state Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training.

8. Have a minimum of 75 hours of supervised paid or volunteer work providing peer recovery services with individuals who have mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders.
 - Sponsorship in 12-step programs does not qualify to meet this requirement, in part because of the supervision requirement.
 - No less than three hours of supervision from a behavioral health professional is required (one hour for every 25 hours of service provided).
 - Peer recovery services can include providing one-on-one support, leading support groups, and providing recovery education.
 - Examples of recovery education include stress management presentations, presenting tools to deal with triggers, and teaching the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (Wellness Recovery Action Plan®), among others.
9. Read, understand, and agree to the following:
 - Successful completion of the state's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training
 - Supervised employment or supervised volunteer experience
 - The CPRS Scope of Activities
 - The CPRS Code of Ethics
10. Enclose all of the following documents prior to mailing the application packet:
 - Completed application
 - Copy of high school diploma or General Equivalency Degree (GED) (*verification upon request*)
 - Certificate of completion from the state's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training dated no more than 12 months prior to application receipt.
 - Signed acknowledgement of the CPRS Scope of Activities
 - Signed acknowledgement of the CPRS Code of Ethics
 - Three completed professional reference forms in sealed envelopes
 - Applicants should give a copy of the Professional Reference Form to each reference and ask them to return the completed form to the applicant in a sealed envelope with their signature across the envelope seal.
 - One of the three professional references may come from a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist.
 - Do not use your family members, therapist, or psychiatrist as a professional reference.
 - Do not open the Professional Reference before mailing.

Certification Procedure

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required documents are submitted and completed as accurately as possible. The completed application and other required documents are

to be submitted by the applicant and faxed to 615-253-3920 or emailed to oca.tdmhsas@tn.gov or mailed directly to:

**Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services
CPRS Certification Program
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
5th Floor Andrew Jackson Building
500 Deaderick Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37243**

Please allow fourteen business days for documents mailed to the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services to be received. If Federal Express or special courier services are used, the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services shall not be responsible for any charges incurred.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services will discuss the application status with the applicant only. Please inform all others that updates must be obtained from the applicant. A status report will be mailed to the applicant at the address listed on the application.

The average application processing time is three weeks. Once complete, each application is reviewed and a certification determination made. Upon successful review, the applicant will receive an email and the certificates will be mailed.

NOTE: Everyone who is certified as a Peer Recovery Specialist must notify the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services, in writing, within fourteen business days of the following:

- Change in name, address, email, or other contact information.
- Change in the agency staff person responsible for providing supervision (even if agency does not change). **Each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist must be under the supervision of a behavioral health professional as defined by the State and as defined in the TDMHSAS Licensure rules, Chapter 0940-05-01.**
- Violations of the CPRS Code of Ethics.

Failure to provide notification of any of these conditions may result in, but is not limited to, suspension of certification.

If the application is not complete upon receipt by the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services, a deficiency letter will be mailed to the applicant. Supporting documentation requested in the letter must be received in the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services ninety (90) calendar days from the date of the deficiency letter before the applicant can be certified. Applications not completed within ninety (90) calendar days after the date of the deficiency letter will be closed. Once an incomplete file has been closed, all applicants must submit a new application and all required documentation.

To obtain a Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Application, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services toll-free at 1.800.560.5767 or visit:
<http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>

V. Grievance Procedure

When an applicant is denied certification or questions the results of the application review, or is subjected to an action by the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services that he or she deems unjustified, the applicant may file a grievance. Grievances are reviewed by the CPRS Advisory Committee. The applicant must submit any grievance within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of notice of denial or any other action deemed unjustified.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required documents are submitted and completed as accurately as possible. The completed grievance form and any other documents required by the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services must be mailed directly to:

**Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services
CPRS Grievance
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
5th Floor Andrew Jackson Building
500 Deaderick Street Nashville, Tennessee 37243**

Allow 14 business days for documents sent to the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services to be received and reviewed. If Federal Express or other special courier services are used, the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services shall not be responsible for any charges incurred. If any grievance is not complete upon receipt by the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services, a deficiency letter will be mailed to the applicant. The supporting documentation requested in the letter must be received in the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the deficiency letter. Any required documents not submitted within thirty (30) calendar days of the deficiency letter will not be considered.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services will forward the grievance to the CPRS Advisory Committee for review. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services will only discuss the grievance with the applicant and any applicant-authorized person or agencies. A report will be mailed to the applicant at the address listed on the form within twenty-one (21) business days.

To obtain a grievance form, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services toll-free at 1-800-560-5767 or visit the website at <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>

VI. Certification Renewal Guidelines

To maintain certification status, each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist must:

- Annually complete and submit a Renewal Application;
- Provide documentation of successful completion of continuing education hours as approved by TDMHSAS;

- Provide at minimum 25 hours of peer recovery services per year, as evidenced by the supervisor's report in the Employment Summary or Volunteer Service Summary (part of the Renewal Application).
- Submit any other documents required by the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services.

Certification Renewal Procedure

Each Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist is responsible for maintaining his or her certification and must submit his or her Renewal Application and all other required documentation at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the end of the recertification date. Unless renewed annually, the certification shall become inactive on the certification renewal date. Inactive certifications can be reactivated within twelve (12) months.

To obtain a Renewal Application, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services at 1-800-560-5767 or visit <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>

VII. Inactive Status

Inactive status means that a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist cannot provide peer recovery services for Medicaid (TennCare) reimbursement. Inactive status is only due to failure to renew certification by the renewal deadline.

Reactivation of Certification Following Inactive Status

Each Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist is responsible for maintaining his or her certification and must submit his or her renewal application and all other required documentation at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the end of the recertification date. Unless renewed annually, the certification shall be inactive on the renewal date. Inactive certifications can be reactivated within 12 months from the renewal date, provided that continuing education hours are maintained.

For more information on the Procedure for Reactivation of Certification, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services toll-free at 1-800-560-5767 or visit the website at <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>

VIII. Continuing Education Guidelines

Continuing education is an ethical obligation for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, as stated in the CPRS Code of Ethics:

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and will share this knowledge with other Certified Peer Recovery Specialists.

Continuing education is required for each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist to maintain active certification and must be earned within the annual certification period.

- Continuing education trainings are not transferable to any other certification period.
- Educational trainings completed prior to obtaining certification as a Peer Recovery Specialist are not eligible for maintaining certification.

Continuing Education Standards

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists must complete ten (10) hours of continuing education trainings, seminars, workshops, or college courses.

- TDMHSAS-approved on-line trainings are limited to five (5) hours out of the 10 hours required.
- A minimum of one (1) hour of continuing education per year must be in ethics.
- Continuing education must be within, but not limited to, recovery in the fields of mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. For examples of appropriate CPRS continuing education topics, visit the website at <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/cprs-forms-guidelines> For a list of upcoming webinars, go to the Recovery within Reach website at <http://goo.gl/cehMF>
- Successful completion of the state's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training may count toward continuing education if it was not used to obtain initial certification.

Continuing Education Verification Procedure

The information below is required to confirm successful completion of approved continuing education hours:

- Certificate of attendance or completion
 - Certified Peer Recovery Specialist's name
 - Certificate signed by the instructor, trainer, or supervisor
 - Training date
 - Number of continuing education hours

OR

- Provider agency in-service trainings as required by the Bureau of TennCare
 - Verification on official agency letterhead
 - Certified Peer Recovery Specialist's name
 - Letter signed by the immediate supervisor
 - Hours of attendance
 - Training date
 - Note: First aid, CPR, and Title VI trainings are not acceptable

OR

- College or university courses
 - A syllabus signed by the professor with a copy of grades for the course.

To obtain a verification form, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services at 1-800-560-5767 or visit the website at <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>

IX. Employment Standards for Reimbursable Services

If the delivery of the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist service is to be rendered as a Medicaid (TennCare) covered service, then the following guidelines must be met:

- Applicants must be employed to work in the role as a paid Certified Peer Recovery Specialist by an agency that is licensed by TDMHSAS and authorized to participate in the Medicaid (TennCare) program.
- Agencies that are licensed by TDMHSAS and authorized to participate in the Medicaid (TennCare) program shall:
 - Establish criteria, under which they hire, train and retain Certified Peer Recovery Specialists.
 - Provide supervision for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists in accordance with acceptable guidelines and standards of practice as defined by the State and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- Each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist providing Medicaid-reimbursable services must be under the supervision of a mental health professional or qualified alcohol and drug abuse treatment professional as defined by the State. The mental health professional or qualified alcohol and drug abuse treatment professional must work for an agency that is licensed by TDMHSAS and authorized to participate in the Medicaid program. The amount, duration and scope of supervision may range from direct oversight to periodic consultation.
 - “Mental Health Professional” means a board eligible or a board certified psychiatrist or a person with at least a Master's degree and/or clinical training in an accepted mental health field which includes, but is not limited to, counseling, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, social work, vocational rehabilitation, or activity therapy.
 - “Qualified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Personnel” means persons who meet the criteria described in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) as follows:
 - (a) Currently meet one (1) of the following conditions:
 1. Licensed or certified by the State of Tennessee as a physician, registered nurse, practical nurse, psychologist, psychological examiner, social worker, substance abuse counselor, teacher, professional counselor, associate counselor or marital and family therapist, or if there is no applicable licensure or certification by the State, has a bachelor's degree or above in a behavioral science or human development related area; or
 2. Actively engaged in a recognized course of study or other formal process for meeting criteria of part (1) of subparagraph (a) above, and directly supervised by a staff person who meets criteria in part (1) of subparagraph (a) above, who is trained and qualified as described in subparagraph (b) and (c) below, and who has a minimum of two (2) years' experience in his/her area of practice; and
 - (b) Are qualified by education and/or experience for the specific duties of their position; and
 - (c) Are trained in alcohol, tobacco and/or other drug abuse specific information or skills. (Examples of types of training include, but are not limited to, alcohol or other drug abuse specific in-services, workshops, substance abuse schools, academic coursework and internships, field placement or residences).

X. Supervision Requirement

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, either employed or volunteer, must be under the general supervision of a mental health professional or qualified alcohol and drug abuse treatment professional in accordance with acceptable guidelines and standards of practice as defined by the State and as defined in the TDMHSAS Licensure rules, Chapter 0940-05-01, as follows:

“Mental Health Professional” means a board eligible or a board certified psychiatrist or a person with at least a Master's degree and/or clinical training in an accepted mental health field which includes, but is not limited to, counseling, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, social work, vocational rehabilitation, or activity therapy.

“Qualified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Personnel” means persons who meet the criteria described in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) as follows:

(a) Currently meet one (1) of the following conditions:

1. Licensed or certified by the State of Tennessee as a physician, registered nurse, practical nurse, psychologist, psychological examiner, social worker, substance abuse counselor, teacher, professional counselor, associate counselor or marital and family therapist, or if there is no applicable licensure or certification by the State, has a bachelor's degree or above in a behavioral science or human development related area; or
2. Actively engaged in a recognized course of study or other formal process for meeting criteria of part (1) of subparagraph (a) above, and directly supervised by a staff person who meets criteria in part (1) of subparagraph (a) above, who is trained and qualified as described in subparagraph (b) and (c) below, and who has a minimum of two (2) years' experience in his/her area of practice; and

(b) Are qualified by education and/or experience for the specific duties of their position; and

(c) Are trained in alcohol, tobacco and/or other drug abuse specific information or skills. (Examples of types of training include, but are not limited to, alcohol or other drug abuse specific in-services, workshops, substance abuse schools, academic coursework and internships, field placement or residences).

The amount, duration and scope of supervision of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists may range from direct oversight to periodic consultation.

XI. Filing an Ethics Complaint

If a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist's performance or behavior is not acceptable and constitutes a probable ethics violation, a complaint may be filed by completing an Ethics Complaint Form. To obtain an Ethics Complaint Form, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services at 1-800-560-5767 or visit the website at <http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/peer-recovery-services>. If an ethics complaint is filed against you, an investigation will occur. You will be notified by writing, provided with a copy of the complaint, and given the opportunity to respond to the allegations. In the event that an ethics complaint is filed against you, your certification may be suspended during the investigation, depending on the severity of the complaint, as determined by TDMHSAS in its sole discretion. If an ethics complaint is found to be substantiated, then disciplinary action may occur, which could include revocation of your certification for a designated period of time.

While the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services cannot assist with civil or criminal matters and does not represent individuals, the CPRS Code of Ethics and the CPRS Scope of Activities will allow the Department to act on the behalf of all Tennesseans.

XII. Suspension of Certification

Suspension is the loss of certification. Length of suspension shall be determined by TDMHSAS in its sole discretion. In the event that an ethics complaint is filed against a CPRS, the certification of the CPRS may be suspended during the investigation, depending on the severity of the complaint, as determined by TDMHSAS in its sole discretion.

Reasons for Suspension

Reasons for Suspension may include but are not limited to:

- Failure to complete and submit an application for renewal within 12 months of the renewal date
- Failure to adhere to the CPRS Code of Ethics
- Failure to adhere to the CPRS Scope of Activities
- Deliberately providing false information on any document submitted to the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services
- Prescribing clinical services

Examples:

- Advice about prescription medications a person should or should not use
- Advice about over-the-counter medications a person should or should not use

- Providing clinical services

Examples:

- Diagnosing an illness
- Providing therapy

Reinstatement of Certification Following Suspension

Reinstatement of certification following suspension may be accomplished through submission of all documents required by TDMHSAS. Requirements for reinstatements may be obtained from TDMHSAS at the time of reapplication.

It is the responsibility of the Peer Recovery Specialist to ensure that all required documents are submitted and completed as accurately as possible. Only completed requests will be processed.

The applicant must submit his or her reinstatement application and all other required documentation at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the end of the suspension date.

To obtain information on the reinstatement of certification following suspension, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services toll-free at 1-800-560-5767.